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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005836

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2014

TAGS: PREL MOPS TU IZ AF

SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA ON ISAF VII COMMAND, ISAF/OEF MERGER,
TURKISH PARTICIPATION IN NATO TRAINING MISSION-IRAQ

REF: ANKARA 4554

Classified By: DCM Robert S. Deutsch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) PolMilOff called on MFA Head of Department for NATO Alper Coskun Oct. 8 to follow up on outstanding issues. On Turkey's command of ISAF VII starting in Feb. 2005, Coskun reported that planning remains on track, and that Turkey is waiting for the results of a NATO force generation meeting in November before deciding whether to offer a Corps HQ, a Corps HQ plus one battalion, or a Corps HQ plus two battalions (reftel). On Turkey's desire for NATO Common Funding for its deployment, Coskun said the GOT will seek the "maximum possible," and will carefully study what EUROCORPS gets. However, Coskun said (adding "Please don't tell TGS I'm telling you this"), Turkey is prepared to pay whatever is necessary out of its own budget once the Common Funding issue is decided.

¶2. (C) PolMilOff inquired as to Turkey's thinking regarding combining OEF and ISAF under a unified command. In response, Coskun read from the final version of the speech he had drafted for Minister of Defense Gonul for the Romania informal ministerial. Any such decision, he read, would make sense militarily. However, it would also have to take into account "the distinct nature of both operations" and "the view of the Afghans themselves." Coskun was anxious to say that the GOT did not oppose the merger, but that it would seek to proceed carefully before agreeing to this move. Coskun confirmed that the Germans were "dead-set against" this proposal, and was skeptical that we would be able to turn them around.

¶3. (C) Finally, we asked whether Turkey was contemplating sending its own personnel to Iraq to take part in NATO Training Mission-Iraq. Coskun responded that the GOT was considering this issue at a senior level, and was concerned about both domestic and Iraqi sensitivities regarding the presence of Turkish troops on Iraqi soil for the mission. He added that Turkey was already offering a number of training courses under the umbrella of its Pfp Training Center for the Iraqis, including a course in November in Ankara. PolMilOff responded that we understood that the IIG had assented to (indeed, had sought) this mission, and that it had presumably done so in full knowledge that all NATO members would be invited to participate. Coskun replied that he assumed this was the case, but appreciated hearing it from us.

¶4. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

EDELMAN